

St. Therese Early Education Center

FAMILY HANDBOOK 2011-2012

7277 N.W. Highway 9
Kansas City, Missouri 64152
Tel: 816-746-1500
Fax: 816-741-4474

www.sttheresenorth.org



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Our Mission Statement

The mission of St. Therese Early Education Center is to provide a developmentally appropriate, safe, happy and nurturing environment for our children to learn, grow, and love in a Catholic, Christian manner.

Our Philosophy

The child is the primary focus of St. Therese Early Education Center. We endeavor to meet each child's individual developmental needs specifically in the areas of social-emotional, cognitive, physical, and language through our curriculum framework and educational philosophies. We value a strong self-esteem and a clear self-concept in each child. We provide a secure, warm, and nurturing environment, which creates a sense of school family and community. We believe learning occurs when children are actively involved with their environment, other children and adults. We hold as basic Catholic Christian tenants that God is love, God loves us, and we and our world were created for good.

Core Values

Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to core values that are deeply rooted in the history of our field. We have committed ourselves to:

- Providing the children in our center with a quality Catholic Christian education
- Appreciating childhood as a unique and valuable stage of human development
- Basing our work with children on knowledge and experience of child development
- Appreciating and supporting the close ties between the child and family
- Recognizing that children's learning is influenced by family, culture, community, and society
- Respecting the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual
- Supporting children and adults to achieve their full potential as members of a community of learners.

Goals for Children

The goals of St. Therese Early Education Center include the basic concepts that we will strive toward as we serve your child and family.

- To provide a Catholic early childhood environment where spiritual values are nurtured
- To provide a physical environment that is safe, clean, healthy, and child-oriented
- To encourage the unique qualities of each child and to be sensitive to his/her individual needs
- To cultivate in each child a healthy respect for self and others
- To maintain a positive classroom atmosphere which encourages successful experiences and a love of learning
- To assist the children in exploring the world around them as they broaden their sense of discovery and develop their scope of learning
- To create a caring and nurturing atmosphere that fosters creativity and a positive self-image
- To develop the child's understanding of receptive and expressive language
- To foster the child's enjoyment of children's literature and music
- To provide a multitude of hands-on activities designed to encourage the child's understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts

- To provide hands-on opportunities with current technology and computers
- To develop physical coordination and skills
- To cultivate in each child compassion, tolerance, and acceptance of other people, in an effort to eliminate prejudice and discrimination of all kinds
- To broaden each child's knowledge of his/her community and the many diverse cultures and peoples within it
- To support teachers with training, resources and the freedom to create a unique learning experience for children
- To create an atmosphere of mutual respect between parents and teachers and support frequent communication to ensure a quality program for each

Curriculum

Each classroom encourages children to be actively involved in the learning process as they experience a variety of developmentally appropriate activities. The daily schedule is planned to balance indoor/outdoor, active/quiet, individual/small group/large group, large muscle/small muscle, child-initiated/ teacher-initiated activities within a child-oriented context. These activities are designed to foster self-concept, develop social skills, encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment, encourage language development, develop physical skills and creative expression and to enhance sound health, safety, and nutritional practices.

Lesson plans are based on state and national standards as well as Project Approach to teach specific skills necessary for age-appropriate development. Activities are directly related to the assessment used for each specific age group and are designed to promote the development of the whole child and address the spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills necessary for lifelong learning.

St. Therese Early Education Center, through developmentally appropriate curriculum, weaves “safe environment” training for children into daily classroom life. Through the use of games, songs and stories, we present children with important life skills that empower them to help protect themselves and encourage them to respect themselves and others. Our Pre-Kindergarten Classes utilize the *Circle of Grace Curriculum* as required by the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. This program teaches children skills that will help keep them safe from dangerous or abusive situations. Our safe environment curriculum information is distributed and explained to all parents at the beginning of the year during our parent information evening. As part of our Catholic Early Education Program, we are using the Sadlier *Discovering God’s Child* and *Discovering God’s World* in our 3’s and Pre-K classes. Joyful songs, poetry and hands-on activities introduce children to God’s gifts of self, creation, and love with family and the church community. This specially designed program addresses the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of children in an early education program.

Child Assessment

St. Therese Early Education Center uses various assessments, based on the age of the child, including Diocesan assessment and developmental screening instruments. The Diocesan assessment tool is based on Missouri state standards and NAEYC criteria. All of the assessment tools used at St. Therese Early Education Center allow you to see exactly where your child is in his/her development and enable parents and teachers to set age level goals and to monitor achievement. Developmental concerns may be discovered and communicated to the family. Information

regarding possible early intervention will be shared at this time. Research shows strong evidence that the earlier a possible problem is identified, the more successful the child will be in subsequent educational years.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Communication between teacher and parent is essential to the success of our program. Teachers will be in contact with you throughout the year to keep you informed of your child's progress in the classroom, via phone calls, notes home, and parent/teacher conferences. All children will be given a developmental screening within the first 3 months of the school year. Parents will be provided information, either verbally or in writing, about their child's development and learning on at least a quarterly basis, with written reports at least 2 times a year. Our teachers work very diligently to use any assessment results to align their curriculum and teaching practices to the interests and needs of each particular child.

Individual conferences will be held in the fall and spring during our designated conference days. Each child will have a portfolio demonstrating their development in the early education program. This portfolio is an authentic collection of your child's work, showing their progress throughout the year. These portfolios will be shared with the parents during conferences. The portfolios will remain in the center and move to new classrooms with your child. At the end of your child's preschool experience the portfolio will be given to you. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns with the teachers or the administrators at any time. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Discipline

St. Therese Early Education Center strives to discourage all forms of unacceptable behavior by maintaining an appropriate classroom environment. St. Therese EEC embraces a philosophy of positive reinforcement, re-direction to appropriate behavior, addressing actions rather than children, and giving children a clear understanding of the consequences of unacceptable behavior. The teacher will handle discipline by various methods of communication and, if necessary, removal from the activity. The Conscious Discipline model is implemented in the center. Staff members are trained in utilizing the safe place technique for children who may need time away from the group. Conscious Discipline includes *I Love You Rituals* designed to make human connections, which create neural connections in the brain. Our brains are shaped by our loving relationships, and the health of a child's relationships with others is the vital link to academic success.

The teacher and the administration will contact the parent for a conference concerning any negative behavior that does not respond to this technique. Under no circumstances will a child be subjected to discipline that is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest or toileting. Parents are encouraged to discuss the needs of their child with the teacher so that we may best serve the needs of each child in our center.

If a situation arises where a child experiences difficulty complying with redirection, time away in the safe place, or displaying a behavior or language that is violent toward a staff member or another child, the parents will be notified. In some situations, it may be necessary to restrict the child's daily attendance, or require time away from the center. In cases such as this, we emphasize communication between the parents, Early Education Center staff, administration, and child. In all situations, our focus will be to keep as a priority, the healthy development and safety of the children, the staff, and the center as a whole.

No form of corporal punishment is allowed by anyone (including families) while on center property. Staff members are mandatory reporters of child abuse.

Hours of Operation

Hours

The center opens at 6:30 A.M. and closes at 6:00 P.M. Part-time program hours are 8:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. for the morning sessions, 12:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. for the afternoon sessions, and 8:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. for the full-day sessions.

Holidays

According to the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph,

School calendars will designate holidays for school personnel. Some of the typical holidays that may be observed on the actual holiday or the closest weekday are:

Mary, Mother of God and New Year's Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
President's Day
Good Friday
Easter Monday
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving
Immaculate Conception (December 8)
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day
New Year's Eve

Professional Development

Professional Learning Days are opportunities for our staff members to continue to develop their skills in providing the best possible learning environments, activities, and experiences for the children. The full-time program is not closed for all professional development dates. Some of the professional development opportunities are for certified teachers only. On these days the part-time program will be closed while the full-time program will remain open. All programs are closed for diocesan-wide professional development requiring the attendance of all staff members. The center will be closed February 17, 2012 for this purpose. Additionally, the center will be closed August 8-12, 2011 for center wide professional development opportunities.

Severe Weather/Emergency Closings

When St. Therese School is closed due to inclement weather, the Early Education Center will also be closed. All Early Education Center evening activities will be canceled. In the case of more than three snow days in a school year, families in the full-time program will receive a tuition credit.

You may receive the information about emergency closings in the following ways:

- 1) You may receive a text message on your cell phone through Textcaster. You may sign up for this free service by going to <http://my.textcaster.com/ServePopup.aspx?id=311> To get inclement weather alerts, choose 'St. Therese Early Education Center'

- 2) Information will also be posted on the following:
St. Therese parish website - www.sttheresenorth.org
Action News KSHB - TV Channel 41 NBC
KMBC-TV Channel 9 ABC
We will be designated as St. Therese North on all these stations.

Accreditation

National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation

St. Therese Early Education Center is accredited through N.A.E.Y.C., the nation's leading organization of early childhood professionals. The center was awarded reaccreditation in March 2009. In light of the crucial importance of early care and development in a child's lifetime learning process, N.A.E.Y.C. carries the torch for raising the quality of early childhood education. N.A.E.Y.C. helps families and others identify high-quality childcare centers, preschools, kindergartens and other early childhood programs. The Accreditation process of the N.A.E.Y.C. examines all aspects of a program, including: teacher qualifications, professional development, teacher/child and teacher/family relationships, curriculum, physical environment, health, safety, leadership and management, teaching, assessment of child progress, and family and community relationships. We believe that everyone involved; the staff, the families that we serve, the Parish, the Diocesan School Office, and our community all contribute to upholding these standards. We know that we continue to learn and grow through our experiences with the families that we serve, and value that partnership with you. For more information concerning NAEYC please visit their website at www.naeyc.org.

Programming Options

Full-Time Program

Arrival and Departure Guidelines - Parents should park their cars in the available parking spaces or circular drive located in the lower level of the Early Education Center. You can then proceed into the building, and sign your child in at the computer located at the desk. You will receive a front door code and create parent codes that will enable you to sign your child(ren) in/out. Please escort your child directly to the classroom or gathering space area.

In order for someone other than the parent/guardian to depart with a child, the individual must be listed in the child's file as an emergency contact or authorized to pick-up and the parent/guardian must call the center or submit a signed letter notifying us of who will be picking up. Photo identification will be requested. Failure to notify the staff may result in the child not being released to that individual until a confirmation phone call is made to the parent/guardian.

Staff Members, who are not family members, are not allowed to transport your child in their personal vehicles. If you have hired a staff member to babysit for you outside of center hours, you must pick your child up from the center and transport them to the location the staff member will meet you. This policy protects you, your child, and the staff member.

Infant Room

Infants will be held, played with, fed and cared for in a nurturing and loving environment. A warm and nurturing relationship with adults is particularly important in developing a child's trust in the world.

Staffing - Infants are to be in a ratio of one adult to four infants. Our classroom is considered full with eight infants and two adults.

Communication - A record of all activities including feeding, diapering, medications, and any other pertinent information will be provided for the parent daily. On a form provided by the center, written instructions should be completed and updated by the parents of new infants entering the center to help with the development and consistency of a schedule for your child. Parents are asked to share information from home that may affect the child during the day such as not sleeping well the night before, teething, changes in routines and schedules. In addition to verbal communication, newsletters will be sent home to parents electronically or as a hard copy. A center-wide monthly newsletter will be sent to family email addresses. If a paper copy is needed, please contact Julie Gardner, Administrative Assistant at jgardner@sttheresenorth.org or (816) 746-1500.

Bottles - In order to maintain consistency from home to the center, and to meet the individual needs of children, infants will eat according to their own schedule. Parents need to supply fresh formula and baby food for infants. Bottles for the day should be prepared according to the manufacturer's instructions and brought to the center. Your child's bottle should be plastic, capped, and labeled with your child's full name. All bottles are sent home at the end of each day. Whole milk will only be given to toddlers one year or older unless there is a physician's documentation on file. For safety reasons, bottles will never be warmed in a microwave oven.

Breast-Feeding - If you are a nursing mother, we will be more than happy to make arrangements for you to visit your infant any time. If the center is not convenient to your workplace for nursing visits, please feel free to supply us with expressed milk to feed your baby. We can store a frozen supply up to three months, or you may provide milk daily.

Food - Once the child is at least 6 months old, parents supply baby and junior food and these should be labeled with initials. If you wish for your child to have food prior to 6 months, you must provide the center with doctor approval. For safety reasons, food will never be warmed in a microwave oven. For older infants, once the parent informs the caregivers that introducing table food has begun, the center will supply snacks and lunch as listed on our menu.

Supplies - Parents are asked to please provide diapers, diaper wipes and diaper cream (with physician signed form, labeled with your child's name). It will be noted on your child's daily information sheet when supplies are running low. Children will be checked and changed at least every two hours while awake. No cloth diapers will be used unless prescribed by a doctor. Two complete changes of weather appropriate clothing should be provided. Clothing should be labeled and stored on your child's hook. Parents will receive notice whenever it is necessary for items to be restocked.

Prior to the beginning of the school year, each child will receive a list of supplies needed for the classroom for the year. These lists reflect the individual needs of each classroom and types of activities conducted. In addition to these items, the teachers may create “wish lists” containing items that you may be able to provide the classroom at minimal or no cost. Such items may include: sidewalk chalk, one-sided paper, recyclable materials, etc.

Clothing - All children should have two weather-appropriate changes of clothing stored at the center, including underwear and socks, marked with your child's name. Soiled items will be sent home and we request that these items are replaced with clean ones the next class session. If your child has an accident and does not have extra clothes, the center will attempt to provide necessary clothing. In the situation that spare clothes are not available, families will be notified.

Sleeping Arrangements - Infants will sleep in cribs, assigned to them as they are enrolled in the room. The center will provide a crib sheet. To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), infants up to 12 months old, unless otherwise ordered by a physician, are placed on their backs to sleep. For infants younger than 8 months, a blanket can be used but will be tucked into the mattress and reach only as far as the infant's chest. No other stuffed animals or pillows will be in the crib. Following NAEYC guidelines, we do not swaddle children.

Walkers - The center excludes the use of baby walkers. However, the use of Exer-saucers (stationary round entertainment seats) are allowed on a minimal basis to allow children additional movement opportunities.

Arrival and Departure - Infants spend time on the floor exploring their environment. Since debris is tracked in on your feet, we ask that all visitors to the infant room remove their shoes or cover their shoes with booties prior to entering the classroom. If you have older children attending the center or the school, we ask that you deliver those children before bringing the infant to the classroom. At departure, we ask that the infant be picked up before the older child(ren). Older children will not be permitted into the infant/toddler rooms. Please see page 7 for specific information on arrival and departure procedures.

Toddler Room

Children will be given opportunities to play and explore their world in a safe and loving environment. Music, toys, and activities will be developmentally appropriate for this age. Self-help skills are encouraged. Toddlers need a world filled with responsive interactions and language. This includes many conversations with others, books, songs, as well as listening and responding to their vocalizations and words.

Staffing - Toddlers are to be in a ratio of one adult to four children. Our classroom is considered full with eight children and two adults.

Communication - A record of all activities including diapering, medications, and any other pertinent information will be provided for the parent daily. Parents are asked to share information from home that may affect the child during the day such as not sleeping well the night before, teething, changes in routines and schedules. In addition to verbal communication, newsletters will be sent home to parents electronically or as a hard copy. A center-wide monthly newsletter will be sent to family email addresses. If a paper copy is needed, please contact Julie Gardner, Administrative Assistant at jgardner@sttheresenorth.org or (816) 746-1500.

Sippy Cups - Children will begin using sippy cups at this stage of their development. Sippy cups will be provided by the center. Whole milk, provided by the center, will be given to the children one year or older unless there is a physician's documentation on file.

Food - Toddlers will be offered two nutritious snacks and a lunch that the center provides. If you prefer a lunch brought from home, it must be labeled with child's name and the date. As the center is a "peanut-free zone", we request that no peanuts or peanut byproducts are included in food sent from home. You are more than welcome to bring birthday treats to share with the class. Please see page 25 for more information concerning our policies for food brought into the center.

Supplies - We ask parents to please provide diapers, diaper wipes and diaper cream (with physician signed form, labeled with your child's name). It will be noted on your child's daily information sheet when supplies are running low. Children will be checked and changed at least every two hours while awake. No cloth diapers will be used unless prescribed by a doctor.

Prior to the beginning of the school year, each child will receive a list of supplies needed for the classroom for the year. These lists reflect the individual needs of each classroom and types of activities conducted. In addition to these items the teachers may create "wish lists" containing items that you may be able to provide the classroom at minimal or no cost. Such items may include: sidewalk chalk, one-sided paper, recyclable materials, etc.

Clothing - All children should have two weather-appropriate changes of clothing stored at the center, including underwear and socks, marked with your child's name. Soiled items will be sent home and we request that these items are replaced with clean ones the next class session. If your child has an accident and does not have extra clothes, the center will attempt to provide necessary clothing. In the situation that spare clothes are not available, families will be notified.

Sleeping Arrangements - Toddlers will be taking daily naps on cots. We ask that parents provide a blanket for their child. Blankets are to be taken home every Friday to be washed and returned on Monday with your child.

Arrival and Departure - Toddlers spend time on the floor exploring their environment. Since debris is tracked in on your feet, we ask that all visitors to the toddler room remove their shoes or cover their shoes with booties prior to entering the classroom. If you have older children attending the center or the school, we ask that you deliver those children before bringing the toddler to the classroom. At departure, we ask that the toddler be picked up before the older child(ren). Older children will not be permitted into the infant/toddler rooms. Please see page 7 for specific information on arrival and departure procedures.

Two-Year-Old Rooms

Two-year-olds and three-year-olds learn best by experiencing their environment through their senses, physical activity, and social interactions with other children. Children develop feelings of competence and trust through positive interactions with adults and peers. Routines are important at this age as children begin to develop a sense of expectancy and understanding of sequencing. As the children are continuing to develop self-help skills and a sense of belonging, food will be served in family-style settings with the adults sitting, eating and engaging in appropriate table conversation with the children.

Ages of Children - A child who turns three on or after August 1st will remain in the Two-Year-Old Room during that school year.

Staffing - Our classrooms are considered full with 12 children and two adults. Between the ages of 22-36 months, the ratio is one adult to six children. On certain occasions when the certified teachers are not in the classroom and the center remains open, appropriate substitute teachers are employed. The daily routine and lesson plans are followed to ensure consistency for the children.

Communication - A record of all activities including diapering, medications, and any other pertinent information will be provided for the parent daily. Parents are asked to share information from home that may affect the child during the day such as changes in routines and schedules. In addition to verbal communication, newsletters will be sent home to parents electronically or as a hard copy. A center-wide monthly newsletter will be sent to family email addresses. If a paper copy is needed, please contact Julie Gardner, Administrative Assistant at jgardner@sttheresenorth.org or (816) 746-1500.

Food - The children will be offered two nutritious snacks and a lunch that the center provides. If you prefer a lunch brought from home, it must be labeled with child's name and the date. As the center is a "peanut-free zone", we request that no peanuts or peanut byproducts are included in food sent from home. All meals will be served in family-style manner with the children learning to serve themselves with adult assistance as needed. Adults will sit with the children, modeling appropriate table conversation, and the use of table manners. Food will not be withheld or given as a reward or punishment. Forks will be introduced as a utensil for eating. You are more than welcome to bring birthday treats to share with the class. Please see page 25 for more information concerning our policies for food brought into the center.

Cups - At this age, children will be drinking from small cups. Whole milk will be given to the children until they are 2 years old, then 2% milk will be provided. Children will begin exploring pouring liquids with the assistance of the classroom staff members.

Supplies - We ask parents to please provide diapers, diaper wipes and diaper cream (with physician signed form, labeled with your child's name). It will be noted on your child's daily information sheet when supplies are running low. Children will be checked and changed at least every two hours while awake. No cloth diapers will be used unless prescribed by a doctor.

Prior to the beginning of the school year, each child will receive a list of supplies needed for the classroom for the year. These lists reflect the individual needs of each classroom and types of activities conducted. In addition to these items the teachers may create "wish lists" containing items that you may be able to provide the classroom at minimal or no cost. Such items may include: sidewalk chalk, one-sided paper, recyclable materials, etc.

Unless specifically requested by the teacher, all toys and valuables **MUST** be kept at home, as toys from home can be difficult to share and may become misplaced or broken.

Clothing - All children should have two weather-appropriate changes of clothing stored at the center, including underwear and socks, marked with your child's name. Soiled items will be sent home and we request that these items are replaced with clean ones the next class session. If your child has an accident and does not have extra clothes, the

center will attempt to provide necessary clothing. In the situation that spare clothes are not available, families will be notified.

Sleeping Arrangement – The children will be taking daily naps on cots. We ask that parents provide a blanket for their child. Blankets are to be taken home every Friday to be washed and returned on Monday with your child.

Toilet Learning - Toilet Learning is a cooperative effort between the family and the child's teachers. The most important factor in making this experience successful and as stress-free as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Most positive toilet learning will occur only after children show signs of physical control (or awareness) of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process.

Some signs of readiness include: showing an interest in sitting on the toilet, ability to take clothes and diaper off without help, ability to verbalize he/she needs to sit on the toilet, and remaining dry for long periods of time.

During toilet learning, the following guidelines will be followed:

- Children will be supervised during toilet learning and will be praised for their efforts.
- Individual developmental abilities of each child shall be considered. Children shall not be punished emotionally or physically for soiling or wetting themselves.
- Families will provide sufficient extra clothing for their children. If an accident occurs, the child will be changed into clean clothes. Extra clothes that are worn home should be replaced the next day.
- Families will be advised on a regular basis of their child's progress.

Arrival and Departure - Upon arrival we ask that parents take their child to their classroom or to the gathering space if before 7:30a.m. Children have a cubbie and a hook for storage of their personal items. Please make sure that their items are placed in the appropriate location. Children will be in the gathering space from 6:30-7:30a.m. and from 5:00-6:00 p.m. Please see page 7 for specific information on arrival and departure procedures.

Classroom Celebrations - set aside for special holidays, are planned by the teachers and may vary according to the classroom. A \$10 fee will be assessed for each child in the Older Twos classrooms to cover expenses of classroom celebrations. This will make planning easier for parents and teachers. If you visit the center during a celebration, please park in the upper school lot and make other arrangements for siblings.

Three- and Four-Year-Old Rooms

The 3- and 4-year-old classroom learning environments consist of well-planned learning centers that allow for child choice and self-directed play, small groups, and supportive teaching that prepare children for academic excellence. The development of language, mathematical reasoning, and scientific thought are emphasized throughout all the centers. Changes to the learning environment, activities, and projects reflect emerging interests and individual goals. Learning center opportunities result in the guided experiences that encompass all the skills and understanding necessary for optimum development and success in school.

Ages of Children- Children must be three-years-old before August 1st to be enrolled in the three- and four-year-old rooms. All children enrolled in these programs must be using the restroom independently prior to the start of the school year.

Staffing - On certain occasions when the certified teachers are not in the classroom and the center remains open, appropriate substitute teachers are employed. The daily routine and lesson plans are followed to ensure consistency for the children.

Communication - Any pertinent information will be provided for the parent daily. Parents are asked to share information from home that may affect the child during the day such as changes in routines and schedules. In addition to verbal communication, newsletters will be sent home to parents electronically or as a hard copy. A center-wide monthly newsletter will be sent to family email addresses. If a paper copy is needed, please contact Julie Gardner, Administrative Assistant at jgardner@sttheresenorth.org or (816) 746-1500.

Food - Children will be offered one or two nutritious snacks and a lunch, depending on their hours of attendance. You may bring in a lunch from home if desired. Food brought from home must be labeled with child's name and the date. As the center is a "peanut-free zone", we request that no peanuts or peanut byproducts are included in food sent from home. All meals will be served in family-style manner with the children learning to serve themselves with adult assistance as needed. Adults will sit with the children, modeling appropriate table conversation, and the use of table manners. Food will not be withheld or given as a reward or punishment. You are more than welcome to bring birthday treats to share with the class. Please see page 25 for more information concerning our policies for food brought into the center.

Supplies - Unless specifically requested by the teacher, all toys and valuables MUST be kept at home, as toys from home can be difficult to share and may become misplaced or broken.

Prior to the beginning of the school year, each child will receive a list of supplies needed for the classroom for the year. These lists reflect the individual needs of each classroom and types of activities conducted. In addition to these items the teachers may create "wish lists" containing items that you may be able to provide the classroom at minimal or no cost. Such items may include: sidewalk chalk, one-sided paper, recyclable materials, etc.

Clothing - All children should have a weather-appropriate change of clothing stored at the center, including underwear and socks, marked with your child's name. Soiled items will be sent home and we request that these items are replaced with clean ones the next class session. If your child has an accident and does not have extra clothes, the center will attempt to provide necessary clothing. In the situation that spare clothes are not available, families will be notified.

Field Trips - A field trip is a way to enhance the center's curriculum and enrich the children's experience. Only children who are four before August 1st will be attending field trips during the school year, if they are scheduled. There are two to three trips planned during the school year. At all times the teacher is to be in charge and will set the expectations for the children. A bus will be secured for the field trip and all information will be sent home for parents to read and sign. Parents may be asked to accompany the class on field trips. (See page 23 for volunteer requirements). Parents will be responsible for paying their own admission and/or parking fees. We are unable to accommodate siblings on field trips. If a parent wishes to accompany his/her child on a field trip and bring a sibling, they may do so. However, the parent and sibling may not ride the bus and the parent is responsible for entrance fee expenses of the sibling. The parent may NOT take or be responsible for any children, other than their own, in the class. Additionally, a parent may not take their child, enrolled in the EEC, from a field trip location without prior communication with the center administration.

Sleeping Arrangements - All preschool-aged children enrolled in full-day programs are required to have a rest time each day. Following licensing guidelines for the state of Missouri, all children of preschool age, must have at least 45 minutes of quiet time per day. The actual length of the rest period for your child will depend upon the age of the children in the classroom. Parents are asked to provide a blanket as the children will be resting on cots. A small pillow or a soft toy may be included as well depending upon the preference of your child. All sleeping items should be taken home every Friday to be washed and returned on Monday with your child.

Arrival and Departure - Upon arrival we ask that parents take their child to their classroom or to the gathering space if before 7:30a.m. Children have a cubbie and a hook for storage of their personal items. Please make sure that their items are placed in the appropriate location. Children will be in the gathering space from 6:30-7:30a.m. and from 5:00-6:00 p.m. Please see page 7 for specific information on arrival and departure procedures.

Classroom Celebrations - set aside for special holidays, are planned by the teachers and may vary according to the classroom. A \$10 fee will be assessed for each child to cover expenses of classroom celebrations. This will make planning easier for the parents and teachers. If you visit the center during a celebration, please park in the upper school lot and make other arrangements for siblings.

Part-Time Program

The 3- and 4-year-old classroom learning environments consist of well-planned learning centers that allow for child choice and self-directed play, small groups, and supportive teaching that prepare children for academic excellence. The development of language, mathematical reasoning, and scientific thought are emphasized throughout all the centers. Changes to the learning environment, activities, and projects reflect emerging interests and individual goals. Learning center opportunities result in the guided experiences that encompass all the skills and understanding necessary for optimum development and success in school. This program option follows the school calendar. In most cases, when the school is not in session, neither is the part-time preschool.

Ages of Children - Children must be three-years-old before August 1st to be enrolled in a part-time program. All children enrolled in these programs must be using the restroom independently prior to the start of the school year.

Staffing - Certified and assistant teachers follow the St. Therese School schedule including holidays and breaks for the school.

Communication - Any pertinent information will be provided for the parent daily. Parents are asked to share information from home that may affect the child during the day such as changes in routines and schedules. In addition to verbal communication, newsletters will be sent home to parents electronically or as a hard copy. A center-wide monthly newsletter will be send to family email addresses. If a paper copy is needed, please contact Julie Gardner, Administrative Assistant at jgardner@sttheresenorth.org or (816) 746-1500.

Food - Children will be offered one or two nutritious snacks and a lunch, depending on their hours of attendance. You may bring in a lunch from home if desired. Food brought from home must be labeled with child's name and the date. As the center is a "peanut-free zone", we request that no peanuts or peanut byproducts are included in food sent from home. All meals will be served in family-style manner with the children learning to serve themselves with adult assistance as needed. Adults will sit with the children, modeling appropriate table conversation, and the use of table

manners. Food will not be withheld or given as a reward or punishment. You are more than welcome to bring birthday treats to share with the class. Please see page 25 for more information concerning our policies for food brought into the center.

Supplies - Children in part-time classes should bring a backpack with them to class (large enough for a notebook), with your child's name on the BACK of the pack. Unless specifically requested by the teacher, all toys and valuables MUST be kept at home, as toys from home can be difficult to share and may become misplaced or broken.

Prior to the beginning of the school year, each child will receive a list of supplies needed for the classroom for the year. These lists reflect the individual needs of each classroom and types of activities conducted. In addition to these items the teachers may create "wish lists" containing items that you may be able to provide the classroom at minimal or no cost. Such items may include: sidewalk chalk, one-sided paper, recyclable materials, etc.

Clothing - All children should have a weather-appropriate change of clothing stored at the center, including underwear and socks, marked with your child's name. Soiled items will be sent home and we request that these items are replaced with clean ones the next class session. If your child has an accident and does not have extra clothes, the center will attempt to provide necessary clothing. In the situation that spare clothes are not available, families will be notified.

Field Trips - A field trip is a way to enhance the center's curriculum and enrich the children's experience. Only children who are four before August 1st will be attending field trips during the school year, if they are scheduled. There are two to three trips planned during the school year. At all times the teacher is to be in charge and will set the expectations for the children. A bus will be secured for the field trip and all information will be sent home for parents to read and sign. Parents may be asked to accompany the class on field trips. (See page 23 for volunteer requirements). Parents will be responsible for paying their own admission and/or parking fees. We are unable to accommodate siblings on field trips. If a parent wishes to accompany his/her child on a field trip and bring a sibling, they may do so. However, the parent and sibling may not ride the bus and the parent is responsible for entrance fee expenses of the sibling. The parent may NOT take or be responsible for any children, other than their own, in the class. Additionally, a parent may not take their child, enrolled in the EEC, from a field trip location without prior communication with the center administration.

Sleeping Arrangements (only applies to children enrolled in the full-day programs) - All preschool-aged children enrolled in full-day programs are required to have a rest time each day. Following licensing guidelines for the state of Missouri, all children of preschool age, must have at least 45 minutes of quiet time per day. The actual length of the rest period for your child will depend upon the age of the children in the classroom. Parents are asked to provide a blanket as the children will be resting on cots. A small pillow or a soft toy may be included as well depending upon the preference of your child. All sleeping items should be taken home every Friday to be washed and returned on Monday with your child.

Arrival and Departure

Parking Lot Procedures - Parents should drop-off and pick-up their child(ren) at the upper level - which is the front of the School and Parish Center. There will be a single lane (closest to the building) for drop-off and pick-up, entering the "Enter Only" campus entrance, proceeding behind the church, and to the Education and Parish Center. We will be staffing 2 different doors - the main door entering the Parish and Education Center (located by the flag poles), and the

door at the end of the building, closest to the exit drive, and located off the Kindergarten hallway. Early Education students will be taken from the front door to the Kindergarten Hallway. The teacher or staff member will come to your car door (be sure to display the NAME CARD in the driver side window).

AM/Full-Day classes - you may drop-off your child between 7:30-7:50 **ONLY** if you have an older child in the Grade School. The sibling must walk the child into the building to the staff waiting inside the doors. The front door will be locked at 7:45, as Grade School students will be in their classroom. If your child does not have a sibling in the Grade School, you may drop off from 7:50-8:00 at the door closest to the exit drive. Pick-up for the morning class is 11:00, at the upper level door by the Kindergarten Hallway. Please drive in a single lane, and the teacher will bring your child to your car.

PM classes - will drop off at the Kindergarten Hallway door, on the upper level from 11:50-12:00, and pick up again at that door at 3:00. All pick-ups for the PM & Full-Day classes must be by 3:05 and completed prior to grade school dismissal. If you arrive after 3:10, your child will be brought back down to the center and a late fee will be assessed. If your PM/full-day child has a sibling in the Grade School, please follow the pick-up procedures from the school by parking in a space, walk to the door to pick up your child and return to your car to await your other child(ren).

Extended-Day Option - If your child is in a Full-Day or AM class and needs care prior to drop-off time or if your child is in a Full-Day or PM class and needs care after pick-up time, parents must contact the center for more information. An additional fee is required to utilize this option.

Classroom Celebrations - set aside for special holidays, are planned by the teachers and may vary according to the classroom. A \$10 fee will be assessed for each child to cover expenses of classroom celebrations. This will make planning easier for the parents and teachers. If you visit the center during a celebration, please park in the upper school lot and make other arrangements for siblings.

Summer Program

Each summer, St. Therese Early Education Center offers families a summer program with added outdoor and off-site activities. Summer is a special time of year for children and an opportunity to engage in new and different experiences. By using the outdoors as an extension of the classroom, St. Therese provides opportunities for children to learn and grow in new ways, while maintaining the same quality care and education provided during the school year. Enrollment occurs in the spring, with a separate registration form for summer, and is offered on a first-come basis. There will be an extra activity/transportation fee for children who go to off-site activities (children who are four before August 1st).

Health & Safety

St. Therese Early Education Center maintains stringent health and safety practices. Staff members undergo screenings during the hiring process, including background reference checks. Staff members certified in CPR, First Aid, and Bloodborne Pathogens (infectious control) are present in the center at all times. All staff members are trained with regard to proper hygiene practices, which include hand-washing procedures, general infection control, diapering, and toileting procedures. We will ensure that certain equipment, items, and surfaces are sanitized using soap and water followed by a bleach solution on a regular schedule. The center management conducts routine fire and emergency drills on a regular basis.

To ensure that families and children feel comfortable at all times, families of enrolled children are welcome to visit at

any time under an open-door policy. We provide our own security keypad system/secured access, ensuring that access is available only to parents/guardians and authorized personnel. Families who enter the building on a regular basis for our full-time program will be given a code to enter the building. Families will be notified of any security code changes in writing. It is important that only adults access the code on the security pad. All other families entering the building may gain access by pushing the white button. To make certain that the center is kept as secure as possible, we ask that you not allow unknown people to walk in with you or enter the center upon your departure.

Medical Records

In order to ensure and protect the health of all children, we need current medical information on each child prior to enrollment.

- A *Child's Medical Examination Report* signed by a physician or a nurse practitioner under the supervision of a licensed physician within six weeks of admission and not more than 12 months prior to enrollment. This should be updated annually.
- A current immunization record which is updated accordingly following any immunization. If you have chosen for your child to be exempt from receiving any immunizations, a card from the health department must be completed and on file at the center. Your child may be excluded from the program for the duration that there is a communicable illness of an immunization that was not administered.
- A *Medical Emergency Form* is completed to include information required for administering emergency treatment.
- A *Medication Consent Form* is required in order for a child to receive prescription and over-the-counter medication.

Child Illness Policy

At St. Therese, we understand that it is difficult for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work or planned activities. It is suggested that alternative arrangements be made for occasions when children must remain at home or be picked up due to illness. Exclusion from the center is sometimes necessary to reduce the transmission of illness or because the center is not able to adequately meet the needs of the child. If your child becomes ill while in attendance, you will be notified to come pick them up immediately. Until the designated person arrives, the child is kept comfortable in the care of an adult and is away from other children. We ask that ill children remain at home for their comfort and for the safety of other children. Reducing the contact between contagious children and non-contagious children decreases the chance of spreading infection around the center. Children should be excluded from the school setting for the following reasons:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities
- Fever of 100 degrees or more (must be fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication before returning)
- Diarrhea - stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet
- Vomiting
- Extreme nasal or bronchial congestion - green mucus discharging from nose or throat
- Severe coughing - red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched crouping or whooping sounds after coughing
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge) until on antibiotics for 24 hours

- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment
- Strep throat until 24 hours after treatment
- Head lice until after treatment and child is nit-free
- Scabies until 24 hours after treatment has begun
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- Pertussis (whooping cough) until 5 days of appropriate antibiotics
- Hand foot and mouth disease until fever is gone and spots are no longer present (7-10 days)

The final decision whether to exclude a child from the program will be made by the center administration.

Children need to remain home for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to the program and be able to fully participate in all center activities, including outdoor time. In the case of a (suspected) contagious disease or continuing symptoms, a doctor's note may be required before returning. Parents must immediately contact the center if your child contracts a communicable disease. The center notifies families in writing and verbally if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease.

Medication

According to Diocesan Policy 460.4...

“Non-prescription medication is not dispensed by the center except upon written authorization of a child's physician. Prescription medication is dispensed only if, it is not the first dose, medication is in a prescription container and written authorization from the parent is on file.”

We will administer medication to children with a signed form from the parent and child's physician. If possible, check with your child's physician to see if a dose schedule can be arranged that does not involve the hours your child is in the center. Only authorized individuals are allowed to administer medication in the center.

Prescription medication must be in the original container and must have the child's name and instructions regarding dosage, times to be administered, name and number of the physician, and expiration date, clearly marked.

Non-prescription medication includes Tylenol, Motrin (or their generics), cough medicine, lotions/ointments including diaper cream, teething medication, sunscreen, nasal sprays, or any kind of over-the-counter medications that may need to be used. In order for these to be administered to your child, a *Medication Consent Form* must be completed each school year and have physician and parent's signatures, a list of the non-prescription medications, the proper dosage according to the child's age/weight and the reason for why we might administer. All non-prescription medications must be in the original container and labeled with the child's complete name.

A medication utensil (for liquid medication) must be supplied and have the child's name written on it.

The *Authorization of Medication Administration* form must be signed by the parent each day medication is to be given while at the center. Parents should drop medication off at the front desk and sign this form with complete information including date, name of medication, dosage, illness, and time(s) to be given. This form will remain with the child's records, allowing us to record the days, times, dosages and who administered the medication that your child received. Families may obtain an *Authorization of Medication Administration* form from the center in order to complete at home to avoid the morning rush during arrival at the center.

Designated administrators administer all medications. The center stores medication in compliance with Accreditation criteria. Unused or expired medication will be returned to the parent. Medication will not be administered by the center before 10:00 A.M. or after 4:00 P.M. Breathing treatments will be administered, however treatments given at the center should be in addition to treatments provided at home in either the morning or evening. If only one or two daily treatments are needed, please provide those treatments at home. For ongoing medical conditions requiring administration of medications on and off throughout the year and at the discretion of the center staff, a Special Needs/Medical Information Form must be completed and on file. These conditions include but are not limited to asthma, allergies, and seizures.

Parents may not administer medication to their child while in our care.

Allergy Prevention

Families are to notify the center regarding children's food or environmental allergies and health conditions. A list of children's food allergies is posted in each classroom and the kitchen, after the parent gives consent. Staff members familiarize themselves with the allergy list and consult the list as appropriate to avoid the risk of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies. Due to the prevalence of peanut allergies, St. Therese Early Education Center is a "peanut-free zone." However, we may serve some snacks that are prepared in peanut oil or in factories that also package peanut products. If your child has a severe allergy to peanuts or any other substance, please be sure to give complete details to administrative staff who will pass this information on to appropriate staff members.

The *Special Needs/Medical Information Form* will be given to any family that has a child with any special developmental, health or nutritional needs. This is to be completed by a parent before the start of the school year and updated as needed. It is to be signed by a parent and an administrator before being copied for the teacher and kept on file.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development, commonly seen in infants, toddlers, and two-year-olds. Biting is a behavior that is very disturbing to all involved. When it occurs, biting cannot be ignored. Children bite for different reasons. Some of these reasons may include feeling frustrated or threatened, being unable to express their feelings or needs verbally, being excited or over-stimulated, exploring cause and effect relationships, teething, and being hungry or fatigued. When biting happens, we clearly label it as unacceptable and explain the reason in words the child can understand. This is done after first caring for the child who was bitten. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for biting and that teach the child alternative acceptable behaviors. Delayed punishment at home will not be understood by the child.

Incident reports will be written for the child who was bitten and to the family of the child who bit. We will work together with the families of the biter and the bitten child to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change. We will make every effort to modify the behavior quickly and the names of the children involved will remain confidential.

Safety Measures

Smoking, firearms, and any other significant hazards that pose risks to children and adults are prohibited at the center.

Children and adults will be protected from air pollutants by limiting time outdoors on yellow and orange-alert days. No outdoor play is permitted on red-alert days.

Fire, shelter-in-place, and tornado drills are conducted regularly.

In order to increase the safety of all of our children, we request that our families do not leave unattended vehicles running or children alone in unattended vehicles.

General Policies

Enrollment Procedures

Enrollment in the center is confirmed in the following order: current center or Grade School families, registered St. Therese Parishioners (receiving tithing envelopes and attending Mass), then members of our community. Currently enrolled families will complete an annual registration packet for the upcoming fall and summer programs. A per child registration fee will be due from all families when registering. All returning families' financial commitments must be paid in full prior to registration in order to receive a registration packet.

The center recognizes the Missouri school cut-off date of August 1st. A child who turns 3 or 4 before August 1st may attend a preschool program. To enroll in Kindergarten at St. Therese, Diocesan policy 310.1 states a child must be five by July 31st. Some children who are age eligible for Kindergarten may need another year of preschool.

Both staff and children in true ecumenical spirit will welcome all children into the Catholic, Christian educational community of the center. We admit children of any sex, race, color, nationality and/or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities accorded to children of the center.

Kindergarten Enrollment

If you presently have a child who is age-eligible for Kindergarten and you are interested in St. Therese School, you can pick up a copy of the "Kindergarten Interest Form" from the School office.

St. Therese is a stewardship parish. This means that all parish members are asked to make a financial commitment to St. Therese Catholic Community to fund all ministries. Please keep in mind that the current cost of educating each student at St. Therese School is \$5400 per year.

The requirements for entry into St. Therese School are as follows:

- You must be a registered active member of St. Therese Catholic Community for at least one year prior to entrance in our school

OR

- You must agree to the terms of tuition for St. Therese School

Prior to registration for the upcoming school year, all school and Early Education Center financial commitments must be paid in full.

Notice of Withdrawal from the Program

A written notice of withdrawal from the program two-weeks in advance is required. You are responsible for your child's tuition during this two-week period even if you choose not to have your child attend during this time.

Changes in Family Information

As a part of the enrollment process family information is completed. This information needs to be updated as changes occur. A form will be provided to families on a quarterly basis to ensure that we have accurate information concerning persons who are emergency contact individuals and are authorized to pick up your child (at least 2 local must be listed). Families must update changes of address, employment, email addresses, telephone numbers, or authorized pick up information as changes occur. Families must list the names of persons that are authorized to pick up their child(ren) and inform the center if someone other than parents will pick up the child(ren). In order for someone other than the parent/guardian to depart with a child, the parent/guardian must call the center or submit a signed letter notifying us of who will be picking up. Photo identification will be requested.

Ten-Hour Policy

Following Missouri Licensing Guidelines, a child's attendance should be limited to no more than 10 hours per day. We feel that this is in the best interest of the children, and encourage families to consider different options for drop-off and pick-up that will provide your child with the least amount of time attending the center on a consistent basis. The computer sign-in system will calculate the number of hours in a day that each child attends the center. The Director will contact you to discuss this policy if your child is consistently attending in excess of 10 hours per day.

Attendance

Please call the center if your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:30 A.M. so we can have a correct lunch count and be able to wish your child well if they are ill. If you are planning a vacation or family trip, please notify the center prior to the child's absence and inform your child's teacher.

Fees

All tuition is based on a monthly fee, specified at time of registration. No refunds are given for illness, vacations, or holidays. See page 6 for more information on inclement weather days. All payments are due on or before the 1st of each month for that month. Payments received after the 5th will be automatically charged a late fee of \$15.00. Families will receive a monthly statement after the 10th of each month through your child's cubbie or backpack.

Payment Options:

- 1) You may put your check/money order payments in the box at the front desk. Please write your child's name(s) in the memo section of the check.
- 2) Mail your payments to St. Therese, attn: Teri Jo Garitz
- 3) Pay by Master Card or Visa by calling 741-5400 x106 EACH TIME to authorize credit card payment. When calling in, please leave your personal code and amount to be processed. A current form must be on file and forms are available at the front desk for those who are interested.
- 4) If your child is in our part-time program and you use our carline, you may hand your check payment to your child's teacher.
- 5) If paying by cash, prior arrangements must be made with the Director or Assistant Director. All payments made with cash must be the exact amount of tuition. The EEC does not regularly have change.

One check per family is encouraged if you have more than one child at the center. A 10% discount will be applied to the lowest tuition for those families with more than one child at the center.

If you should fall behind in your tuition and have not communicated extenuating circumstances, your child's attendance in the program will be affected until payment has been received. You may discuss extenuating circumstances with the Director, Ann Lachowitz at 746-1500. For billing/statement questions, please contact Teri Jo Garitz at 741-5400 x106.

When it is necessary for you to send miscellaneous payments with your child (for field trips, book orders, donations, etc.), please place it in a sealed envelope and clearly mark with your child's name, teacher's name, the amount being sent and what it is for on the outside of the envelope. These payments must be handed to your child's teacher or brought in to the front desk. The center is not responsible for lost money prior to being turned into the appropriate person.

Children not picked up by 6:05 P.M. will be charged \$2.00 per minute until the parent arrives. The front desk wall clock shall be the official time instrument used in cases of overtime. Please be prepared to pay cash at the time of pick-up or the following morning. Even if you contact the center of your delay, the late fee will be assessed. If Phase 1 of the Kansas City Snow Ordinance is officially in effect, a late fee will not be charged. Part-time children should be picked up no later than 11:10 for the morning sessions and 3:10 for the afternoon sessions. If not picked up by this time, the family will be notified and will be charged a late fee.

Children with Special Needs

All children who enter St. Therese Early Education Center are on a 2-month probationary period pending evaluation of the child's needs. St. Therese Early Education Center attempts to meet the educational needs of all children; however, for children with special needs, our center may only be equipped to provide an appropriate environment for those students with mild learning deficits. St. Therese Early Education Center is not equipped to care for children with certain special needs; therefore, any such care is conditional upon the consent of the center administration. Parents of children with special needs are required to be forthcoming and share all educational evaluation information and disabling conditions prior to specialized placements/identification, and familial issues, which may require special educational programming. The routine probationary period is still applicable, as this will allow the administration and staff the time to determine the appropriateness of placement in our center. In all cases, the child must be able to participate and substantially benefit from our program without risk to himself/herself or to the other

children. We make every attempt to work with children on an individual basis and it is important for us to know their strengths and weaknesses. If there is anything special we need to know about your child (i.e. hearing or speech difficulties, changes in family structure, history of any behavioral problems), please let your child's teacher know before school starts so he/she can meet with you. The more we know about your child, the better we will be able to meet his/her needs.

Children's Records

The information in your child's record is considered confidential and will remain in a locked cabinet on-site at all times. Only those who are directly related to the care of your child, center administration, national accrediting agencies or the state health department will have access to the record without your written permission. As a parent/guardian, you may have access to your child's record within 24 hours of the request to view the record.

Communication

Communication between parents and staff of St. Therese Early Education Center is essential in maintaining an effective program. This communication will take place through various methods:

- Daily verbal communication between parents and teachers or administrators of the center
- Teachers will send home newsletters electronically or as a hard copy to parents
- Center Newsletters will be emailed or sent home once a month by the center administration. These will include calendar or policy changes or reminders, special events, review or clarification of center policies and guidelines, and general center or Parish happenings
- Parent/Teacher conferences will be held twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring
- An annual survey allows you to rate your satisfaction and comment on all aspects of the program.

Halloween Procedures

St. Therese Early Education Center enjoys the ability to share in the festivities for this holiday. In order to ensure the safety of the children, we need to make sure that we follow some core guidelines.

- Costumes should not have sharp edges (like the plastic masks). For younger children it is suggested that they do not have masks at all, as they interfere with vision and breathing. It is difficult to tell if a child is in respiratory distress when they are behind a mask.
- Part-day preschool children may choose to wear their costumes to school on the day of the parade. The full-day children should bring their costume.
- Weaponry with costumes should not come to the center (light sabers, knives, swords, etc.)
- Send your child in a simplified version of their costume for school so that important accessories are not left behind (i.e. Hats).
- If bringing snacks for classroom parties, please provide healthy snacks (cheese and crackers, fruit, etc). Children will get plenty of sugar from participating in trick or treating activities.

Visitors and Volunteering

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the center at any time during the hours of operation. We encourage parents to

participate in family involvement opportunities, some of which include special events, the Early Education Center PTO, and volunteering in the classroom or during special activities. If you visit the center, please park in the upper grade school lot, enter through the main entrance and check in at the office before proceeding to the EEC. As we take your child's safety very seriously we ask that you follow additional safety procedures in the building. Prior to going to your child's classroom, you must visit the front desk area to sign in and receive a sticker indicating that we know you are in the building.

All parent volunteers must complete the diocesan background screening process and attend Protecting God's Children training. For more information see below. We enjoy having you in our classrooms and appreciate your many talents and skills. The diocese has put these procedures in place to ensure the safety of all children.

Parents are encouraged to offer their skills, talents, and resources to benefit our program and their children. Parents may call in advance or schedule a regular time for each week or month to volunteer. The teacher will assign tasks/duties where needed. These duties may include: helping cut out things for the classroom, reading to a child/children, helping at centers, helping at parties, volunteering for field trips, etc.

Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocesan Requirements for Volunteers

Background Checks

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph uses Integrated Screening Partners (ISP) to do background checks on all employees and volunteers. ISP is a nationwide vendor that manages their business in a manner consistent with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and HIPAA. The background checks we perform are done online. ISP provides a secure site. The reports are sent via email and are typically stored electronically.

Information reviewed in a Nation-Wide Jurisdictional Background Screening:

- Criminal misdemeanor records
- Criminal felony records
- Child abuse records
- Social security verification

Forms to provide permission for the parish to conduct a background check are available at the front desk of the EEC. The cost for conducting the background check is \$10. The fee is due prior to the check being conducted. We appreciate your understanding and attention to this important matter.

Protecting God's Children Training

To ensure that our children are safe from abusive situations, all staff members and volunteers must participate in Protecting God's Children Training prior to working in a classroom with children. This is a two and a half hour training session offered by the Diocese in different parishes throughout the diocese. In order to make sure that you are eligible to volunteer in the classroom and attend field trips, please sign up for a training as soon as possible. You may access the information at www.virtus.org. Once the course is complete, please bring a copy of your certificate to the front desk of the EEC so that we may keep it on file.

Donations

We are very appreciative of any donations made throughout the year. Our tuition and fees cover our operating budget and leave little for equipment purchase or replacement. The teachers will post a “wish list” at Family Fun Night and are most appreciative of any donations from families. Each teacher will send out a “supply list” with items needed by each individual child in the class. We will participate in occasional fundraisers to raise money needed for those items that are not incorporated in our operating budget.

Clothing

The clothing your child wears to the center should be simple, washable, sturdy, and comfortable. Please avoid wearing or bringing items with a high sentimental or monetary value.

Outdoor play is an important part of each day's activities, so please provide appropriate clothing for the season. Please put your child's name on each article of OUTER clothing. All shoes should be fastened and have rubber soles. For safety reasons, flip-flops should not be worn. Boots should be large enough for the child to put on easily.

Nutrition and Food Service

An early morning snack of cereal and milk is available from 6:30-7:30 AM. Portions represent the basic food groups and the food is served family-style. Monthly lunch and snack menus are provided with the center newsletter, posted in each classroom, and available at the front desk.

If a lunch or snack is brought from home, it should meet the USDA's food guidelines and be labeled with your child's full name and the date. If refrigeration is needed, please see your child's teacher. If you do bring in a lunch or snack for your child, please be sure to avoid peanuts or peanut products as we are a “peanut-free zone” center.

Individual snacks may be brought to the center in celebration of a child's birthday. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits (no whole grapes) or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Healthy idea options include raw vegetables and ranch dressing, cheese, crackers and fruit. Please refrain from sending in whole cakes.

Planning parties outside of the Early Education Center

Many of our children wish to have friends invited to their birthday parties. If you are inviting the entire class, you may place the invitations in the classroom cubbies. If the entire class is not being invited, we ask that you take care of the invitation process outside of the center by making phone calls, sending emails or mailing invitations. You may request name, address, phone number, or email lists of the families in your child's class from the front office. Information will only be shared if parents have granted permission.

Pets

Our accreditation criteria have strict guidelines regarding pets and/or animals, which may come in contact with children and staff members. Animals must be in good health and must have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter that show that the animals are fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. Parents are asked to contact the EEC before planning to bring any animals into the school environment.

Resources

St. Therese www.sttheresenorth.org

Accreditation www.naeyc.org

Discipline www.lovingguidance.com

Protecting God's Children www.virtus.org

Referral Network www.thefamilyconservancy.org

Missouri Standards www.dese.mo.gov

Project Approach www.projectapproach.org

Early Learning in Kansas City www.marc.org

This handbook is provided by St. Therese Early Education Center. The pastor and administration retains the right to amend the handbook for just cause. St. Therese parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

St. Therese Early Education Center

I have received and read the St. Therese Early Education Center Family Handbook, and all information specific to center policies, where applicable. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the policies and procedures.

I understand it is my responsibility to go directly to Center management with any questions I may have regarding the policies and procedures and information contained in the St. Therese Early Education Center Family Handbook.

Information contained in this handbook may be subject to change.

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach, and turn in to the front desk.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Print Name

Print Child(ren)'s Name(s)

Date